

CHAPTER 41

Hâ Mîm

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 6 *sections*; 54 *verses*)

This chapter bears the name of its initial letters, Hâ Mîm, or the name Hâ Mîm Sajdah. It is also known as *Fussilat*, which means a thing *made plain*, the word occurring in verse 3. It is the second chapter of the Hâ Mîm group. As regards its subject-matter, and date of revelation, see introductory note to the last chapter. The first section contains an invitation to the acceptance of the Truth; the second gives a warning in case of rejection; the third refers to the evidence of man's own faculties against the rejection of Truth; the fourth shows that believers are strengthened by inspiration; and the fifth points to the effect of revelation, which gives life to those who are morally and spiritually dead. But if warnings and arguments are not heeded, the doom is inevitable, the signs of which could be witnessed in the gradual spread of Truth. This is stated in the sixth section.

SECTION 1: **Invitation to the Truth**

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 Hâ Mîm

2 A revelation from the Beneficent, the Merciful.

3 A Book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur'ân for a people who know —

4 Good news and a warning. But most of them turn away, so they hear not.

5 And they say: Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us, and there is a deafness in our ears, and there is a veil between us and thee,^a so act, we too are acting.

6 Say: I am only a mortal like you. It is revealed to me that your Deity is one Deity, so keep in the straight path to Him, and ask His protection. And woe to the polytheists!

7 Who give not the poor-rate, and who are disbelievers in the Hereafter.

8 Those who believe and do good, for them is surely a reward never to be cut off.

SECTION 2: The Warning

9 Say: Do you indeed disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two days, and do you set up equals with Him? That is the *Rabb* of the worlds.

10 And He made in it mountains above its surface, and He blessed therein and ordained therein its foods, in four days;^a alike for (all) seekers.^b

5a. Note that the coverings of the hearts, the deafness of the ears and the hanging of the veils are used simply to indicate their own determined rejection of the Truth. They resolved neither to open their hearts, lest the Truth should enter them, nor to lend their ears so that they might even hear the preaching of the Prophet. In fact, it was their - own act which brought about that consequence.

10a. For the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days, see 7:54a; the day in fact stands for a stage in growth. The making of the earth in two days and the making on it of the mountains, rivers and of plant and animal life in four days is really one continuous process, there being six days or six stages in all. The first stage is the throwing off of the cosmic matter called the earth; the second stage is the cooling of its surface; the third is the making of the mountains; the fourth is that of blessing it by waters and making in it rivers; the fifth and the sixth stages are spoken of as the ordaining of foods, being, in the first place, the growth of plant life and, in the second, the growth of animal life, culminating in the creation of human beings. That the creation in six days does not refer to the time actually taken in making the *samâwât* and the earth, which is still going on, is noted even by the earlier commentators.

10b. The meaning of this passage is that the foods which are made in the earth are equally accessible to all seekers.

11 Then He directed Himself to the *samâ'* and it was a vapour, so He said to it and to the earth: Come both, willingly or unwillingly. They both said: We come willingly.^a

12 So He ordained them seven *samâwât* in two days,^a and revealed in every *samâ'* its affair. And We adorned the lower *samâ'* with lights, and (made it) to guard.^b That is the decree of the Mighty, the Knowing.

13 But if they turn away, then say: I warn you of a scourge like the scourge of 'Ad and Thamûd.^a

14 When messengers came to them from before them and behind them,^a saying, Serve nothing but Allâh, they said: If our *Rabb* had pleased, He would have sent down *malâ'ikah*. So we are disbelievers in that with which you are sent.

11a. Note that heaven is here plainly spoken of as being originally *dukhân*, *smoke*, *vapour* or *gaseous matter*. The command to creation to come willingly or unwillingly is a reference to the Divine laws working in nature. Everything created, whether in the heavens or the earth, is subject to law. The existence of one law throughout the universe is clear evidence of the existence of One Deity, the Maker of that law.

12a. Just as, about the earth, it is stated in verse 9 that it was created in two days or in two stages, we are told here about the heavenly bodies that they, too, were created in two days or two stages. The creation of celestial bodies is thus subject to the same law. For the seven *samâwât*, see 2:29b. The words that follow — *and revealed in every samâ' its affair* — show that everything created in nature serves a purpose.

12b. See 37:7a.

13a. The first 13 verses of this chapter were recited by the Holy Prophet when 'Utbah ibn Rabî'ah came to him with a message from the Quraish. The message was to the effect that the Prophet should discontinue speaking ill of their deities and condemning their ways, and then they would be willing to make him their chief, or give him the most beautiful woman in marriage, or collect wealth for him. When 'Utbah had delivered his message, the Prophet read these verses; but when he reached verse 13, warning the Makkans of the fate of 'Âd and Thamûd, 'Utbah entreated him to speak no more, and went back to the Quraish to make known to them the Prophet's reply (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

14a. The coming of the prophets from before and behind signifies their impressing the truth of their message upon their people in every possible way. Some understand the coming of the prophets from near and from far (*Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Al-Shaikh Mu'în al-Dîn ibn Safî al-Dîn).

15 Then as to 'Âd, they were unjustly proud in the land, and said: Who is mightier than we in power? See they not that Allâh Who created them is mightier than they in power? And they denied Our messages.

16 So We sent on them a furious wind in unlucky days that We might make them taste the chastisement of abasement in this world's life. And the chastisement of the Hereafter is truly more abasing, and they will not be helped.^a

17 And as for Thamûd, We showed them the right way, but they preferred blindness to guidance,^a so the scourge of an abasing chastisement overtook them for what they had earned.

18 And We delivered those who believed and kept their duty.

SECTION 3: **Man's Evidence against Himself**

19 And the day when the enemies of Allâh are gathered to the Fire, they will be formed into groups.

20 Until, when they come to it, their ears and their eyes and their skins will bear witness against them as to what they did.^a

21 And they will say to their skins: Why bear ye witness against us? They will say: Allâh Who makes everything speak has made us speak, and He created you at first, and to Him you are returned.

16a. The Quraish are warned in these words of an abasing punishment in this life, and a still more abasing punishment in the Hereafter. Their *unlucky days* were the days of drought.

17a. '*Amâ* (blindness) is metaphorically used in relation to the mind, as meaning *erring*; the connection between the two meanings being the *not finding* or *not taking the right way* or *the being blind in respect of the mind* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane).

20a. The bearing of witness by the ears and the eyes and the skin shows the truth of the law that the consequences of evil deeds will become manifest.

22 And you did not cover yourselves lest your ears and your eyes and your skins should bear witness against you, but you thought that Allâh knew not much of what you did.

23 And that, your (evil) thought which you entertained about your *Rabb*, ruined you, so have you become of the lost ones.

24 Then if they are patient, the Fire is their abode. And if they ask for goodwill, they are not of those who are granted goodwill.^a

25 And We have appointed for them comrades,^a so they make fair-seeming to them what is before them and what is behind them, and the word proved true against them among the nations of *jinn* (i.e. the evil educated leaders) and (ordinary) human beings that have passed away before them: they are surely losers.

SECTION 4: Believers Strengthened

26 And those who disbelieve say: Listen not to this Qur'ân but make noise therein, perhaps you may overcome.

27 So We shall certainly make those who disbelieve taste a severe chastisement, and We shall certainly requite them for the worst of what they did.

24a. Allâh's goodwill can be gained in this life, and for those who waste that opportunity here the only way to that goodwill is to go through the ordeal of Fire.

25a. These comrades are wicked companions.

28 That is the reward of Allâh's enemies — the Fire. For them therein is the home to abide. A requital for their denying Our messages.

29 And those who disbelieve will say: Our *Rabb*, show us those who led us astray from among the *jinn* (i.e. the evil educated leaders) and the (ordinary) men that we may trample them under our feet, so that they may be of the lowest.

30 Those who say, Our *Rabb* is Allâh, then continue in the right way, the *malâ'ikah* descend upon them saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised.

31 We are your friends in this world's life and in the Hereafter, and you have therein what your *nafs* desire and you have therein what you ask for.^a

32 A welcome gift from the Forgiving, the Merciful.

SECTION 5: Effect of the Revelation

33 And who is better in speech than one who calls to Allâh and does good, and says: I am surely of those who submit?

34 And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! he between whom and thee is enmity would be as if he were a warm friend.

31a. Verses 30 and 31 show that it is in this life that the *malâ'ikah* descend upon the faithful, giving them the joyful news that they should not have any fear. In fact, it is here, when the faithful are persecuted and oppressed, and when the powers of evil seem to have the upper hand, that such assurances are most needed, and it is here that the *malâ'ikah* give them comfort and strength to bear hardships, and thus they ultimately overcome the forces of evil.

35 And none is granted it but those who are patient, and none is granted it but the owner of a mighty good fortune.

36 And if a false imputation from the *shaitân* afflict you, seek refuge in Allâh.^a Surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing.

37 And of His signs are the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Adore not the sun or the moon, but adore Allâh Who created them, if He it is that you serve.

38 But if they are proud, yet those with your *Rabb* glorify Him night and day, and they tire not.^a

Prostration

39 And of His signs is this, that you see the earth still, but when We send down water thereon, it stirs and swells.^a He Who gives it life is surely the Giver of life to the dead. Surely He is Possessor of power over all things.

40 Those who distort Our messages are not hidden from Us. Is he then who is cast into the Fire better or he who comes safe on the day of Resurrection? Do what you like; surely He is Seer of what you do.

36a. The previous verse teaches the repelling of evil with good. This verse suggests another remedy for evil. The primary significance of *nazagha-hû* is *he charged him with vice* or *spoke evil of him* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by *Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faîd Murtaḍâ*). It is in this sense that the word is used here and the context makes it clear. It is also used in this sense in 7:200; see 7:200a. It also means *intrusion on* or *interference in an affair for the purpose of causing mischief in it* (*Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by *Shaiḥ* Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-

Râghib al-Isfahânî), and the word is used in this sense in 12:100. The Prophet is here told that, if his work is interfered with by evildoers or if false imputations are made against him, he should seek refuge in Allâh, and Divine help, which always comes to the righteous, will make truth triumphant.

38a. The recitation of this verse is followed by an actual prostration; see 7:206a.

39a. The *still earth* signifies land dried up and without herbage; its stirring indicates its moving with life and its swelling the producing of herbage. This is entirely metaphorical. It indicates that, when Divine revelation comes, it gives a new life to men. Attention is called to this in the words that follow. The effect of rain upon earth is likened to the effect of the Qur'ân upon the hearts of human beings. *Dead* here are the religiously dead.

Prostration

41 Those who disbelieve in the Reminder when it comes to them, and surely it is an Invincible Book:

42 Falsehood cannot come at it from before or behind it: a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One.

43 Naught is said to you but what was said to messengers before you. Surely your *Rabb* is the *Rabb* of Forgiveness and the *Rabb* of painful Retribution.

44 And if We had made it a Qur'ân in a foreign tongue, they would have said: Why have not its messages been made clear? What! A foreign (tongue) and an Arab!^a Say: It is to those who believe a guidance and a healing,^b and those who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears and it is obscure to them. These are called to from a place afar.

SECTION 6: Gradual Spread of Truth

45 And indeed We gave Mûsâ the Book, but differences arose therein. And had not a word already gone forth from your *Rabb*, judgment would have been given between them. And surely they are in a disquieting doubt about it.

44a. There seems to be a reference here to the prophecies which spoke of the coming of an Ismâ'îlites or an Arab prophet. The reference to Mûsâ in the next verse confirms

this, because Mûsâ spoke plainly of a prophet like himself appearing from among the brethren of the Isrâ'îlites, who are no others than the Ismâ'îlites.

44b. The Qur'ân is here called a healing because it was a remedy for the religious diseases which prevailed in the world. It is the book which proved itself to be a *healing*, because it found a nation affected with the worst possible spiritual and moral diseases, and within less than a quarter of a century cleansed a whole country and a whole nation of all those diseases. Its healing effect, however, has not been limited to Arabia, and today there is no people on the surface of the earth that does not bear witness to the great healing power of the Qur'ân, which is so far-reaching in its effect that non-Muslims have benefited by it equally with Muslims.

46 Whoever does good, it is for his or her *nafs*; and whoever does evil, it is against it. And your *Rabb* is not in the least unjust to the servants.

Part 25

47 To Him is referred the knowledge of the Hour. And no fruit comes forth from its coverings, nor does a female bear or bring forth but with His knowledge. And on the day when He calls out to them: Where are My associates? They will say: We declare to You, not one of us can bear witness.

48 And those whom they called upon before will fail them, and they will know that they cannot escape.

49 Man tires not of praying for good, but, if evil touch him, he is despairing, hopeless.

50 And if We make him taste mercy from Us after distress has touched him, he says: This is due to me,^a and I think not that the Hour will come to pass; and if I am sent back to my *Rabb*, I shall have sure good with Him. So We shall certainly inform those who disbelieve of what they do, and We shall make them taste of hard chastisement.

50a. The words indicate human being's ungratefulness for Divine blessings. He does not recognize Divine goodness in those gifts, but says "this is due to me", i.e., I have obtained it by my own exertion and I deserve it. And then he denies the Judgment.

51 And when We show favour to man, he turns away and withdraws himself; but when evil touches him, he is full of lengthy supplications.

52 Say: See you, if it is from Allâh, then you disbelieve in it, who is in greater error than he who is in opposition far away?

53 We will soon show them Our signs in farthest regions and among their own people,^a until it is quite clear to them that it is the Truth. Is it not enough that your *Rabb* is a Witness over all things?

54 Now surely they are in doubt as to the meeting with their Lord. Lo! He surely encompasses all things.

53a. The word *âf âq* means *borders* or *extremities of the earth*, or *its remote sides*, and the great message conveyed here is that Islâm will spread to the most distant regions of the earth — *anfusi-him* denoting *their own people*, or the Arabs. What is stated here is this that Islâm will quickly spread, not only in Arabia but in the remote regions of the earth, and this prophecy is contained in a chapter revealed early at Makkah, when Muslims were being severely persecuted and the message of Islâm had apparently little hope of finding acceptance anywhere. If the prophecy is so clear, its fulfilment is clearer still. Within twenty years of its birth, Islâm spread through the whole of Arabia, and within a hundred years, it reached the farthest regions of the earth, both in the East and the West. Both the prophecy and its fulfilment are thus two of the most amazing facts of history